Application No. 10/687,721
Reply to Office Action dated August 12, 2005

<u>AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS</u>

1. (Original) A self-checkout system comprising:

a self-checkout station configured for customer-operated self-checkout of items for purchase;

a mobile data terminal comprising a wireless network interface and a biometric data sensor;

and

a controller operatively coupled to the mobile terminal and to the self-checkout station, said

controller being configured to send data over a wireless network to the mobile terminal

instructing the mobile terminal to initiate a biometric data capture operation, said

biometric data capture operation being related to a self-checkout transaction.

2. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein:

the self-checkout station is one of a plurality of self-checkout stations and the mobile

terminal is operatively coupled to the plurality of self-checkout stations;

the data sent to the mobile terminal to initiate the biometric data capture comprises data

identifying at least one self-checkout station for which biometric data capture is to be

performed.

3. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the biometric data sensor comprises a sensor

    selected from the group consisting of a fingerprint sensor, an iris recognition scanner, and a

    voice recognition device.

4. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the biometric data capture operation comprises

    receiving fingerprint attribute data at a fingerprint sensor.

5. (Original) The system of claim 4, wherein:

    the controller is a shared controller operatively coupled to each of the plurality of checkout

    stations; and

    the controller is configured to administer biometric data capture for multiple ones of the

    plurality of self-checkout stations.

6. (Original) The system of claim 4 wherein the biometric data capture operation further

    comprises input of a date of birth.

7. (Original) The system of claim 6 wherein the controller is configured to query a database

    using the date of birth as a key to retrieve a plurality of candidate age verification records,

    each record associating the date of birth with biometric attribute data characterizing a

    customer fingerprint previously captured at a fingerprint sensor.

8. (Original) The system of claim 4 wherein:

the controller is one of a plurality of controllers;

each self-checkout station comprises a co-located one of the plurality of controllers; and

each of the controllers is operatively coupled to the data terminal.

9. (Original) The system of claim 8, wherein:

the mobile data terminal is one of a plurality of supervisory terminals;

a first one of the supervisory terminals is operatively coupled to the controller by a wireless

data network; and

a second one of the supervisory terminals is operatively coupled to the controller by a wired

data network.

10. (Original) The system of claim 9, wherein the mobile data terminal is a battery operated

mobile supervisory device.

11. (Original) The system of claim 4, wherein:

the mobile data terminal and the controller interoperate to perform a plurality of supervisory

functions associated with customer self-checkout at the checkout station;

the supervisory functions comprise processing of a payment transaction.

12. (Original) The system of claim 11, wherein:

the payment transaction comprises a payment type selected from the group consisting of a

credit card payment, a debit card payment, and an electronic funds transfer payment; and

processing the payment transaction further comprises receiving a signature input at the

mobile data terminal.

13. (Currently Amended) A method for self-checkout of items that are sold on a restricted basis,

the method comprising:

following scanning of an item by a self-checkout customer, retrieving from a database a

record indicating whether the scanned item is a restricted item;

when the item is a restricted item, verifying a characteristic of the customer, said verifying

comprising:

receiving a target data input at a biometric sensor, the target data characterizing a

biometric feature of the customer;

retrieving from a database a plurality of candidate records, each of said records

comprising biometric attribute data associated with a different one of a

plurality of customers;

comparing the target data to the biometric attribute data in the plurality of records

to identify a matching record;

when a matching record is identified, based on the matched record, determining

whether said item sold on a restricted basis can be sold to the customer[.]

in response to the signal indicating a need for supervisory assistance, initiating an

exception process whereby input is received from a store attendant to cause a

new database record to be generated, said new database record enabling

automated age verification of said customer during subsequent purchase

transactions.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13 wherein:

said restricted basis comprises an age restriction;

verifying further comprises receiving from the customer a date of birth; and

retrieving the plurality of candidate records comprises querying based on the date of birth

to retrieve the plurality of records.

15. (Original) The method of claim 13 further comprising:

generating a signal indicating a need for supervisory assistance when a matching record

cannot be identified.

16. (Cancelled)

17. (Currently Amended) A method of processing input at a supervisory terminal in a self-

checkout system using a handheld supervisory device, the method comprising:

at a self-checkout station,

generating a supervisory request signal indicating that input of customer biometric data is

required to further the processing of a self-checkout transaction by a customer,

transmitting the supervisory request signal to a handheld supervisory device, said

handheld device comprising a biometric sensor; and

at the handheld supervisory device,

receiving the supervisory request signal,

presenting a prompt alerting a user of the handheld device that input of customer

biometric data is necessary;

receiving customer biometric data at the biometric sensor; and

transmitting the biometric data to the self-checkout station for further processing.

18. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein the biometric sensor comprises a fingerprint

sensor.